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To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to hear that the NBER Digitization Tutorial is being held this year and am excited to submit my application. As a third year graduate student, I am eager to introduce myself to and learn from the accomplished researchers belonging to the NBER digitization group. Below I outline my course of study and research interests.

Course of Study

As a third year graduate student I have pursued a rigorous study of both empirical and theoretical industrial organization, microeconomic theory, and econometrics. My coursework has included the 1st year PhD sequence in microeconomics and econometrics within the Northwestern economics department as well as a detailed marketing sequence. In particular, both economic sequences focused on a careful study of the standard topics in 1st year economics. These include: choice, general equilibrium, production, markets, game theory and mechanism design, asymptotic theory, identification, and experimental design. This coursework was complemented by a detailed discussion in my marketing sequence of large scale field experiments, discrete choice, and Bayesian statistics.

In my second year I continued to focus on developing my econometric tools, while broadening my understanding of the research frontier. I am attended courses in industrial organization, non-parametric econometrics, microeconomic theory, and organizational economics. Throughout my second and third year I have continued to be an active participant in various research seminars in marketing, economics and strategy.

Research Interests

My research interests span both empirical and theoretical applications in industrial organization and microeconomic theory. In particular, I am interested how digital markets and resources have changed how consumers acquire information, make decisions, and participate in social interaction.

Over the past year I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of detailed Adobe data sets to better understand privacy online. In particular, me and my coauthors, Garrett Johnson and Scott Shriver, have been working with the Adobe Analytics data to better understand how e-commerce and online traffic has been impacted by the European Unions expansive privacy legislation, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In tandem, we have collected a handful of unique data sets that track firm behavior online pre and post the GDPR. These projects aim to provide empirical evidence to help better understand how firm outcomes have been effected by privacy legislation, how firms have chosen to implement the GDPR regulation, and more generally how firm behavior online has changed.

I will also mention some early stage work and interests that are currently being pursued. Related to my empirical work on the GDPR, I have theoretical interests in questions such as 'how should markets for data sets be structured given individuals with privacy concerns?' and 'how should do privacy regulations impact data collection and competition?' These questions are of critical importance to regulators as they attempt to craft policy to address privacy concerns; not only do we have little empirical understanding but the theoretical literature on these topics is also sparse. I hope to work on an economic framework for answering these questions, drawing on some recent computer science literature.

Finally, I am also pursuing a project on innovation and incentives for innovation in the digital economy. In particular, I am working with a micro-stock image platform to design incentive schemes to better understand how contributing photographers trade off between exploration and exploitation in this context. Current work is using structural methods to examine these questions and explore relevant counterfactuals. Future work hopes to implement field experiments to more thoroughly examine the model predictions.

Summary

The economics of digitization pose a rich set of questions with complicated and unique answers. I hope to learn more about the current work being pursued and the methods being implemented; the NBER digitization conference provides an excellent opportunity to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply.

Best,

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